

GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0308

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March 7, 2011

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The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

I am writing to respectfully request the expeditious nomination of three federal judges to fill the current judicial vacancies in the District of Arizona.

As you may know, Congresswoman Giffords has worked extensively to expand the capacity of Arizona's federal court system, which has been congested with record caseloads and mounting backlogs largely as a result of the crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border. The federal court system stands behind our critical efforts as a nation to secure the border and crack down on the illegal flow of drugs and people into this country. Continued federal judicial vacancies in Arizona could inhibit border security efforts and jeopardize the bench's ability to provide justice and security for all Americans.

In December 2010, with the support of Arizona's federal district judges, Congresswoman Giffords sent a letter to the Ninth Circuit Court requesting the declaration of a judicial emergency in the District of Arizona. The judicial emergency was granted on January 21, 2011. While the judicial emergency declaration has allowed the district judges in Arizona additional time to prosecute felony cases, it cannot relieve them of their escalating caseload burden or the additional work brought on as a result of Arizona's judicial vacancies.

In FY2009, Arizona ranked first in the Ninth Circuit and third in the nation for criminal case filings. In FY2010 alone, the District saw a 21 percent increase in felony and defendant cases. In order to effectively manage this caseload, the Tucson and Phoenix divisions have been forced to utilize an increasing number of out-of-district judges.

Last year, the active judges in the Tucson division were each assigned over 900 felony defendant cases. Their caseloads have grown again this year following the tragic death of Judge John Roll on January 8, 2011. A testament to his great service, Judge Roll took on

the largest caseload at the District Court in Tucson, and his 1,100 cases have now been distributed to the remaining three judges.

Thank you for your attention to the ongoing crisis in our courts. I look forward to working together to fill Arizona's three federal judicial vacancies and ensure swift justice in the District of Arizona.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pia Carusone', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Pia Carusone
Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Giffords